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18 May 1960

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Geographic Research

SUBJECT: Proposed Elimination of the GIR

1. I'm not greatly impressed with the Task Force's grounds for proposing GIR elimination. The GIR is not a quarterly in the proper sense of the word; timeliness as an objective is subordinate to the dissemination of short, detailed analyses of trends, developments, and events that the intelligence community should be aware of. For reasons of economy and convenience, the analyses -- some of which are not of the complexity or magnitude that warrants separate processing and reproduction -- are simply bundled into the GIR package. Finally, the Task Force's feeling that the information in the GIR might be disseminated through the NIS bespeaks a colossal ignorance of NIS purpose and timeliness. The NIS synthesizes rather than reports on topics of intelligence significance; its revisions appear on the newstands at best only every 5-6 years; and the contents of the NIS when it does appear are already 2-3 years old.

2. On the other hand, there is no doubt that the GIR has some negative features:

a. The necessity of harmonizing completion dates for individual articles means that the publication sops up more than its share of coordination time and effort.

b. The necessity of filling out issues may require a priority research expenditure by one or more branches that does not accord with other priorities on hand.

c. Dissemination of more important and, perhaps, "timely" articles is delayed by the pace of assembly of less significant material.

d. The impact of individual articles is reduced by burial amidst 3-5 others.

3. Assuming that the Task Force is really interested in reducing the number of intelligence issuances, I recommend that we do not contest their recommendation. We would be hard put to it to fully justify the essentialness of the GIR as a publication vehicle. It should, however, be made clear to [REDACTED] that GRA acquiescence is based on the availability of inconvenient, but adequate alternative vehicles for GIR material.

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4. I propose that the GIR type of analyses be continued as honest branch programs, with the results -- retailored as appropriate -- disseminated in the form of short GR's and GP's. The difficult part of the transition will be the handling of the very brief, generally map-review type of reports. These might be handled as before on a grouped basis (e.g., GP-60-112, Recent Bloc Maps). We shall also have more dissemination lists to figure out.

5. The elimination of the GIR should take effect with GIR 60-1, already in reproduction. Material for GIR 60-2 is only part of the way along and can be redirected as proposed above.

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Chief, Geography Division

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